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a team victory

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The Signal



Friday, April 21, 2006

Published for the Department of Defense and the Fort Gordon community

Vol. 26, No. 16

News UPDATE

Cinco de Mayo

The annual Cinco de Mayo Festival is noon-1 a.m. **Friday and April 29** at Barton Field.

Enjoy ethnic food and beverages, live entertainment, a craft show, flea market, carnival (**Thursday to April 30**) and more.

For information, call (706) 791-6779 or go to www.fortgordon.com.

Awards ceremony

The installation's quarterly awards ceremony is 8:30 a.m. **Thursday** in the lobby of Conrad Hall. For information, call Linda Means at (706) 791-1871.

Job fair

The Fort Gordon Job Fair is 10 a.m.-2 p.m. **May 2** at the Army Reserve Center, Building 14401, on 15th Street and Lane Avenue. For details call Eddie Ferguson at (706) 791-2009.

Tech expo

There is a tech show from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. **Tuesday** at the Gordon Club. Admission is free.

Displays include computer furniture, electronic test products, networks and cabling, mass storage solutions and more. For information, call (888) 282-2262 or go to www.atc-expo.com/shows.

Days of Remembrance

The 15th Signal Brigade's Days of Remembrance program is 11:30 a.m. **Wednesday** in Alexander Hall. For information, call (706) 791-2269.

Pre-K registration

Registration for the Georgia Pre-Kindergarten program here is 8 a.m.-4 p.m. **May 9** at Building 45410 on 46th Street.

Children must be 4 years old on or before Sept. 1. For information, call (706) 791-4790.

EEO training

The Equal Employment Opportunity office is holding annual EEO refresher training for all employees.

Training is offered 1:30-3:30 p.m. **Tuesday** and **May 9** or **23**, **June 6** or **20** in Olmstead Hall; or 8-10 a.m. **Aug. 29** or 1-3 p.m. **Sept. 8** in Alexander Hall. Employees must attend one of the sessions.

Employment training for supervisors is from 9-11:30 a.m. **May 16** at the Eisenhower Army Medical Center auditorium or 9-11:30 a.m. **July 19** in Nelson Hall Studio B.

Supervisor EEO/POSH refresher training is 1:30-3:30 p.m. **May 18** or **June 15** in Olmstead Hall.

To register for the managers course or for information, call (706) 791-4551.

AER drive nears end

Charmain Z. Brackett
Contributing writer

With the deadline for this year's Army Emergency Relief campaign just around the corner, Diane Sarber is concerned about the goal.

"We had high expectations this year," said Sarber, installation AER officer.

As of April 17, only about \$80,000 had been collected with a goal of \$155,000. Last year, Fort Gordon exceeded its goal of \$140,000, raising \$167,000.

AER is a program in which Soldiers can help their own.

The program provides no-interest loans or in some cases, grants, to Soldiers, retirees and widows who have an unforeseen financial emergency.

Sarber said an emergency such as a car repair which could not have been anticipated or money saved for is one instance when an AER loan or grant could be used.

While the installation raised a record amount last year, that

doesn't even come close to covering the amount dispersed through AER, said Sarber.

"We dispersed more than \$830,000," she said.

By using AER, a Soldier who might already be experiencing financial difficulties won't fall further into the hole of debt, she said.

"Sometimes we've dug too deep, and we need a lifeline. This is a bridge to get to where you need to be," she said.

The deadline for this year's campaign is May 15, and there is still time to plan fundraisers.

Fundraisers, she said, are a good way to reach those who might not be able to help otherwise.

"You can't solicit a (Department of the Army) civilian, but they could buy a cake at a bake sale," she said.

Sarber said that AER staff is available to help with awareness briefings for units.

For information, call Sarber at (706) 791-1918 or Melissa Smith at (706) 791-3371.



Photo by Steve Brady

LWN-eU goes online

Brig. Gen. Ronald Bouchard (left), U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon deputy commanding general, shows Brig. Gen. Randolph Strong, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, the new LandWarNet-eUniversity website as it officially went active April 12. LWN-eU provides access to LandWarNet training material and references at schools and centers, as well as linking with the Battle Command Knowledge System hosted by the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth. Officials expect LWN-eU to become the premiere resource for all LWN material. AKO users may access the site at lwn.army.mil.

April: Month of the Military Child

Larry Edmond
Signal staff

(This is part one of a three-part series in observance of the Month of the Military Child.)

Many professionals acknowledge that military children are precious and require special care.

"Military children endure a great deal of change as a result of a parent's military career," said Douglas Ide with the Army's Community and Family Support Center. "The military family averages nine moves through a 20-year career. And in doing so, their children must say goodbye to friends, change schools, and start all over again."

These are long standing hardships that care providers know how to address with up-to-date support systems, activities and programs.

"With the additional burden of the Global War on Terror today, children and youth are sharing all the experiences of their parents in the military," said Pamela Rachal, Fort Gordon Outreach Services Director in the Child and Youth Services Division.

With these facts in mind, the following articles have evolved to provide a picture of the state of readiness at Fort Gordon Child and Youth Services.

Article 1, Celebrating the Military Child examines the national mandate for the military

child and reports on what Fort Gordon Child and Youth Services is actually doing (See *Celebrating*, Page 3).

Article 2, The Laundry List provides a summary of the varied programs provided to newborns, toddlers, children, youth up to age 18, and the parents – both federal employees and military, including how to get in touch with service providers (Coming April 28).

Article 3, About Summer 2006 answers some of the questions heard this time of year by offering particulars on challenging, fun and educational summer activities sponsored by or coordinated through post Child and Youth Services (Coming May 3).



Photo by Bonnie Heater

Jason Ricketts, 4, son of Jason and Sgt. 1st Class Kym Ricketts, gives a thumbs up to express his satisfaction with his pony ride Saturday at the Military Child Carnival here.

Soldier convicted of rape

Marla Jones
Special to the Signal

A 19-year-old trainee was convicted Tuesday of raping a fellow Soldier after a night of drinking at an Augusta hotel.

Pvt. Santos Salinas, Company C, 447th Signal Battalion, admitted he raped another private and was sentenced to two years confinement and a dishonorable discharge by Col. Donna Wright, military judge.

Salinas described a night of drinking in November 2005 with other members of his unit. He was sleeping in a bed with the victim and her boyfriend and said they started kissing. She was intoxicated and fell asleep.

Salinas said he knew she was drunk and had "passed out." He admitted he removed her clothing and had sexual intercourse with her by force and without her consent. When questioned by the judge, Salinas said he knew that, because of her high level of intoxication, the victim was not capable of consenting to sex. He also said he knew she did not realize who she was kissing, that she probably thought it was her boyfriend.

Prosecutor Capt. J.L. Myatt stated that Salinas was caught shop-

lifting cigarettes in the Post Exchange three weeks after he was charged in this case.

Two drill sergeants testified as to Salinas' good character and ability to be rehabilitated.

The victim, who has since married her boyfriend, testified that she has been under stress since the rape, and said "I still cannot talk with my father about it." She said she considered Salinas a friend, and now finds it difficult to trust anyone.

Her husband stated that their friends took sides, and some did not believe her story. He was angry at himself for not preventing the rape.

Salinas, in an unsworn statement to the court, said he was sorry. "Drinking is not an excuse for what I did."

He apologized to his parents and to the victim. "I took away her dignity," he said. "This was the biggest mistake of my life."

"(Salinas) thought he could get away with this because the victim had been drinking and was asleep," Myatt said in closing.

The sentence is subject to approval by the convening authority and review by the U.S. Court of Military Appeals.

(Jones is the deputy public affairs officer here.)

Robbery suspects charged

Larry Edmond
Signal staff

Three Augusta men, two of them former Army and Air Force Exchange Service employees, have been charged with a string of area crimes, including the robbery of the Barnes Avenue Blimpie last July.

Capt. Raashid Williams, U.S. Attorney Special Assistant, who prosecutes all crimes committed by civilians on Fort Gordon, said "With respect to crimes like this, it was an outstanding collaborative effort of CID, FBI and Richmond County to catch the individuals responsible for this (robbery on post) action."

A joint force of FBI, Fort Gordon Criminal Investigation Division and Richmond County Sheriff officers combined to close the loop around what officials are calling a theft ring.

The three men – two 18 year olds and a 19 year old – were arraigned Feb. 18. The trio is suspected of participating in as many as eight crimes in the Augusta area and on Fort Gordon.

They were identified as Alonzo Blake, 18, of Hephzibah, Ga., Jeremiah Lane, 19, of Augusta, and Michael Yarbray, 18, of Augusta.

Each of the men pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The accused face a variety of charges, including housebreaking, ag-

gravated assault, robbery, larceny of government funds, making false statements and conspiracy.

According to CID reports, the case began to unravel when one of the suspects was apprehended and charged following the robbery of a fast food restaurant in Augusta on Nov. 21. Statements from the suspect and similarities to other robberies led investigators to the Fort Gordon employees and the Blimpie robbery.

An investigation initiated based on a 35th Military Police Detachment report indicated that the Blimpie Sandwich Shop on Fort Gordon was robbed at gunpoint on July 22, 2005, by a robber who wore camouflage pants, black gloves and a black and white mask similar to the one used in the movie "Scream."

Two of the suspects arrested were employees of the sandwich shop.

According to Capt. Jonathan Shoenholz, Fort Gordon JAG staff member, the range of penalties for conviction on a felony aggravated assault carry a sentence up to 20 years depending on the circumstances of the case. Conviction of a robbery on federal land carries a maximum sentence of 15 years. Conspiracy convictions generally carry a five year maximum sentence.

The case is being investigated by the FBI.

Post lodging manager best in world

Larry Edmond
Signal staff

The Army lodging manager of the year returned home to Fort Gordon triumphantly, calling his success a team victory.

Keith Hazelrigs, Fort Gordon Army Lodging manager, was named Army Lodging Manager of the Year 2006 at an Army lodging awards ceremony attended by lodging representatives of Army facilities from around the world. The ceremony was held March 30 in Norfolk, Va.

To the team of employees and well wishers who came out to greet him when he arrived at the Greeley Hall Army Lodging facility, Hazelrigs said the prestigious recognition does not go to him alone because it required, “a team effort.”

When Hazelrigs arrived home to Fort Gordon March 31, he was welcomed by a crowd of enthusiastic lodging employees, including James Green, Directorate of Morale, Welfare and Recreation director, Terry Smith, deputy garrison commander, along with other invited guests.

Proudly displaying the U.S. Army Lodging Manager of the Year 2006 trophy, Hazelrigs gave credit for the award to all 140 lodging employees.

“I could not have accomplished this great honor without the help of all my employees,” he said. “Thank you Fort Gordon lodging. Truly, for all of us, this award is about the Soldiers always coming out winners.”

Hazelrigs also paid tribute to two employees, Willie E. Nero and Wanda Rivera-Gonzalez.

“These two people, respectively, represented Installation Management Agency Southeast Region in worldwide competition for Army Lodging Supervisor of the Year 2006 and Employee of the Year 2006 awards.”

Hazelrigs said, “Although Willie (maintenance supervisor) and Mickey (training coordina-



Courtesy photo

A group of well-wishers greets Keith Hazelrigs as he returns from the Army Lodging Conference March 31. Hazelrigs was named Army Lodging Manager of the Year 2006 for Army lodging.

tor) did not win at the national level, I am still very proud they led competition at the IMA SE level – that’s most significant.”

According to Hazelrigs the most important outcome from the award is that all of the lodging employees know they play a vital role in the daily success of Fort Gordon lodging and the mission of making a home away from home for Soldiers.

Ira Beaufort, Army lodging comptroller said, “Keith is a gifted leader...a strong believer in continuous improvement. He is constantly looking for new ways that make it better for guests.”

Hazelrigs is in a business that has a lot of ups and downs. He works with families and Soldiers in transition. His assistants pointed out some of the concerns Hazelrigs and his team in Army lodging faced on the way to this award.

Jerry Hinkle, assistant manager said, “I’m really not surprised. Keith’s many accomplishments include handling many contracts and overflow student loads.” According to Hinkle situations have occurred that required off-post contracts and doubling of enlisted housing capacity that were com-

pleted in such a way as to save the Army travel account in excess of \$3.4 million annually.

This award is a big deal, said Beaufort.

“Fort Gordon is truly honored by Keith receiving this award,” he said.

Competition for this award includes all Army lodging hotels worldwide.

Beaufort compares the state of lodging on post today with its previous state.

“You have to look where Fort Gordon lodging once was an embarrassment to the installation and visitors, that sometimes resulted in Congressional investigations. But Fort Gordon now is acclaimed by many guests as the best lodging operation in Army lodging,” said Beaufort

Fort Gordon lodging made a huge impact at the Army Lodging Awards Ceremony in Norfolk. Hazelrigs was recognized for receiving the Bronze Pineapple award. This award credits Fort Gordon lodging management and staff with completing the first phase of training through the Performance Plus training program with the American Hotel and Lodging Association Educa-

tional Institute.

The goal of this training is to enhance the professional image of Army lodging for the benefit of Soldiers and their families.

The message of team effort voiced by Hazelrigs, carries throughout the lodging staff.

“We really have Mr. Hazelrigs to thank for this program that leads to professional certification,” said Delaine Reeder, front desk manager. “Training through American Hotel is changing the image of our front desk, improving customer service, and is available to all employees.”

“I want every guest satisfied and to know their room is safe, clean, and furnished according to the highest standards – a home away from home for our Soldiers,” said Irma Green, executive housekeeper. “Training through the Educational Institute teaches and reinforces good housekeeping standards.”

The award presentation was made by Col. Charles T. Sniffen, deputy commander/ chief of staff, U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, Va., along with Keith Elder, Morale Welfare and Recreation program manager.

Celebrating military children

Larry Edmond
Signal staff

On April 14 the Senate approved by unanimous consent a resolution honoring military children during this month.

Introducing the resolution on the Senate floor, Ted Kennedy (D-Mass) said, “Children who have grown up in military families hold a very special place in the hearts of most Americans. They didn’t volunteer for service. They didn’t ask to be where they are. When their parents are called away to dangerous places, not only do they miss them, it adds to the worries that children should not have. These children are making a sacrifice just like their parents are doing.”

It is for this reason that the secretary of defense has designated every April as the month of the military child.

Military bases around the world set up special activities including parades, carnivals and events just for kids to honor the sacrifices of military children.

Managed by the Directorate of Morale, Welfare and Recreation, Child and Youth Services at Fort Gordon always has a number of programs on-going for children and youths.

During the month of Month of the Military Child, the Youth and Children Service Division goes all out to show children how important they are.

The month is filled with fun and interesting activities celebrating military children.

Pamela Rachal, Fort Gordon Outreach Services director for Child and Youth Services said, “We have a tremendous amount of programs that serve children from 4 weeks, infants, toddlers, pre-school, pre-k, youth and teens all the way up to age 18.”

With unapologetic fervor

Rachal ticks off positives about the programs.

“All workers in the various programs go through rigorous annual certification inspections, complete with background checks and continuing education requirements.

“The Army’s children services programs like we offer here give parents some extraordinary value for the

money. Parents need to know, it is well-known that we are the national model for child care programs. We do child care like it should be done.”

Rachal laughs, “I am not just selling these services because this is my job. My nine year old daughter has been involved in the program for years. She wants to go back to some of the child care. I have to tell her,

you’re too old for that now. These programs are good.”

The Outreach Services Office is responsible for supporting all of the programs offered by Child and Youth Services. As such, all parents who want to participate in any of the Child and Youth Services Programs have to begin with registration through Outreach Services. *(Call 791-4722 for information.)*

During the month of April, each of the divisions sponsors age appropriate events for the youth in its charge. The Child Care Center organizes a carnival. The Outreach office organizes a convoy, fire department and Soldier visits. Parade and fashion shows have also been provided.

Rachal said the activities are not just about the children.

“We offer parent’s night out that is very popular and growing. This gives parents, especially those working as single parents, a break to do the shopping or go for a romantic dinner.”

The focus is still on the children.

“These kids make real sacrifices...some may have special circumstances that other children don’t have. A lot of these kids have had parents or friends with parents who have died in military service. I know that a lot of this is not just about the child, it is about the interaction between the parent and the child. While we are going through the special events, the parents need to spend quality time with the children” said Rachal.

“This is an opportunity to do things together...to build family bonds that will last a lifetime.”

Rachal opened a folder of brochures and announced “we have a lot of programs and are looking to grow more.”

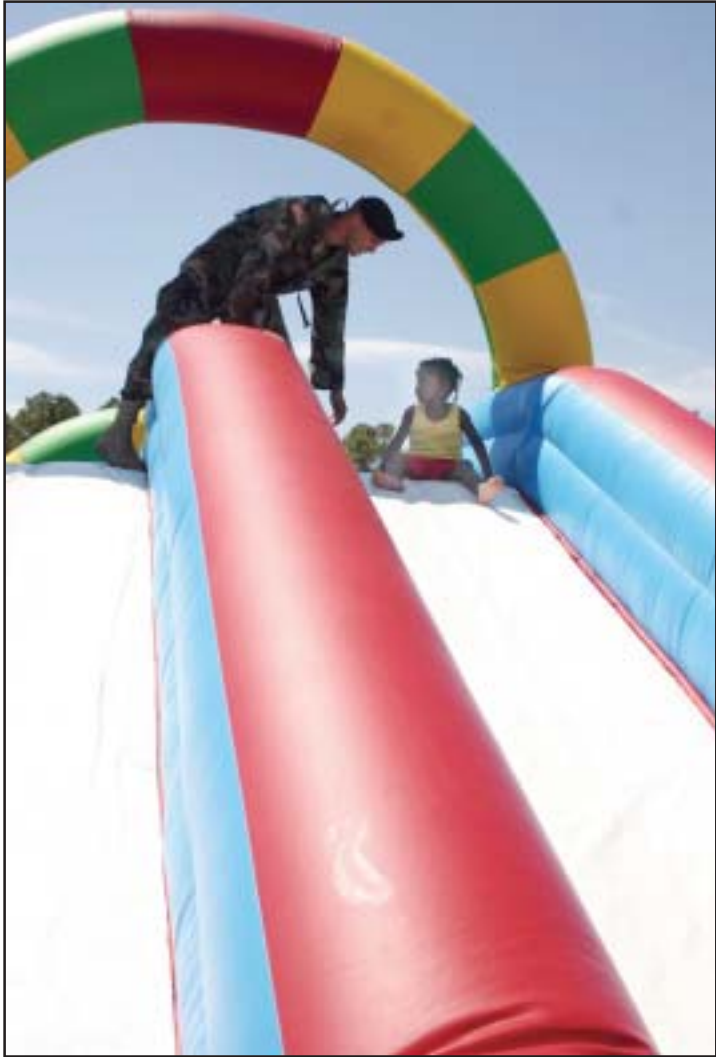


Photo by Bonnie Heater

To Gaberal Antoine, 2, the bottom of the slide seems far away. Pvt. Travis Johnson, who was helping out at the air-filled obstacle, takes a moment to assure her that she has the ‘right stuff’ to complete the task. The slide was part of the Month of the Military Child Carnival Saturday at Youth Services.

EO briefing defines extremism

Leaders learn more about extremism, gang affiliation affecting Soldiers

Kristy Davies
Signal staff

Knowing the signs of extremism or gang affiliation is important for law enforcement and parents. It is also important for commanders and U.S. Army leadership to know.

Commanders, executive officers, command sergeants major, first sergeants and unit representatives learned more about extremism and gangs affecting Soldiers as part of an extremist group briefing presented by a guest speaker, Bill Morales, equal opportunity specialist, 77th U.S. Army Regional Support Command, Fort Drum, N.Y.

The event, titled “Extremism: the domestic threat to readiness” and sponsored by 93rd Signal Brigade, emphasized that no one is immune to gang and extremist influences, not even in the Army.

“This topic is very sensitive,” Morales said as he captured the audience’s attention. “As commanders and civilians, on this post, you’ve been here for a long time and sometimes the indicators are right in front of you and you don’t see it. That’s because no one takes a look at extremism and gangs.”

Morales assured the commanders and Soldiers that the danger signs are near. “Extremism is closer than what you

think,” he emphasized as he named corporate executives, attorneys and business people who are members of gangs and extremist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, militias, Russian mafia and Nation of Islam.

Some of the organizations are disguised as having good causes, but can be a risk for Soldiers to be involved with.

“Right for Life, Department of Environment and Greenpeace,” Morales named as extremist groups. “You may have Soldiers who are sympathetic. Bottom line, you have the authority to say no.”

The briefing was held April 12 to increase awareness and knowledge regarding the domestic threat to unit cohesion and readiness, said Mary Jones, Fort Gordon Equal Opportunity officer.

As he continued, Morales reminded the Army leaders that with new Soldiers coming in they could have been gang members previously and came into the Army with a mission. He also discussed militias and their mission “to overthrow the government.” Morales gave examples on how the extremist groups will talk about the war and then turn it around to their benefit to get Soldiers to join.

“No longer will you see skinheads with all the tattoos, you’ll see them in suits and it’s happening all over America,” Morales added.

The briefing brought awareness on not just extremists and gangs, but their philosophies and behaviors as well.

“Extremists are individuals or groups that are willing to use force or violence to deny basic citizenship rights to others,” explained Jones. “The Army provides equal opportunity and treatment for all personnel, therefore participating in extremist organization and activities is inconsistent with the responsibilities of military service.”

The commanders and Soldiers were able to walk away with a better sense of what they should look for and that the Army is working to protect its members.

“The presentation was very eye-opening and informative about the growing extremist and gang organizations within our own borders,” said Lt. Col. Stephen Middleton, 56th Signal Battalion commander. “I feel confident that our Army EO personnel and leaders are well trained and postured to identify and investigate situations which may cause harm to the good order and discipline of our ranks.”

Remembering to take care of Soldiers was a message Morales stressed to the leadership.

He said, “Every single time you turn away from a Soldier, we’re giving that opportunity to the other side.”

Carrying on restoration

Bonnie Heater

Signal staff

(This is the second of four part series on the restoration of military equipment here.)

The M59A1 Armored Personnel Carrier, located at Heritage Park here, is one of several pieces of military equipment that has been restored to the image of its former self.

The equipment, which is owned by the U.S. Army Center of Military History, is being preserved as part of the Army's heritage, according to Robert Anzuoni, Signal Corps Museum director. "The restoration provides the American public an opportunity to view and learn about our military culture and history," he said. Each of the M-59A1s cost about \$7,000 to restore.

"The M59 armored personnel carrier was introduced in 1953 to replace the M75 armored personnel carrier," said Anzuoni. "It was produced at half the cost of the M75 and was designed as a troop transport instead of a fighting vehicle as there were no real provisions to fight mounted."

The Ordnance Division of the Food Machinery and Chemical Corporation produced a number of pilot models, according to www.globalsecurity.org. In



Photos by Bonnie Heater

The M59A1 Armored Personnel Carrier, located at Heritage Park, recently underwent restoration.

the spring of 1954 armored battalions started receiving the M59s. By the end of production in 1960, more than 6,300 M59s had been built at the San Jose, Calif., FMC plant.

Many civilian components were used in the manufacture of the M59 to keep production costs down. Mechanically, both the M75 and the M59 were similar to the M41 light tanks.

The engines and transmissions in the M59 were located

in either sponson, which left the cargo and personnel area free. The transmission was attached directly to the rear of the engine facing the rear so the transmission was pointed forward.

Troops could access the vehicle through a large rear ramp that was fitted with an escape hatch, and through roof hatches over the passenger compartment. Early vehicles were built with Model MG Hydramatic transmissions. They featured a rotating mount for an M2HB .50-caliber machine gun around the commander's vision cupola.

The commander's cupola on mid-production vehicles sported periscopes instead of the earlier vision blocks, but retained the external .50-caliber MG mount.

Late productions of the M59s, known as M59A1s, were fitted with the M13 cupola, which was armed with an internally mounted .50-caliber machine gun. The early cupolas produced a

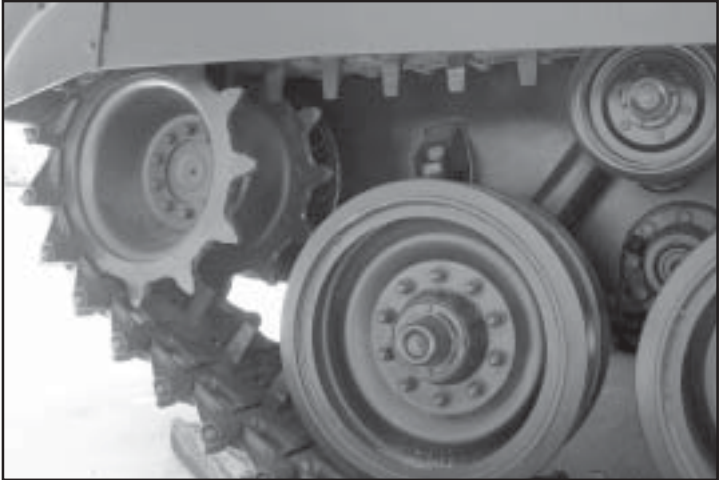
height of 102.6 inches and the mid-production cupolas were 112.5 inches tall. M59s lacking the M13 cupolas could only carry 1470 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition.

The 18-ton M59s were propelled in the water by means of its tracks. It was fully amphibious with a trim vane and rubber seals around all openings which provided a watertight compartment. It carried a crew of two and 10 passengers and traveled up to a maximum speed of about 55 mph.

When the infantry bench seats were folded up and the ramp was down a Jeep could be driven up into the carrier compartment.

Other variants on the same chassis were the M84 mortar carrier and an armored ambulance.

The M 59 series provided the basis for the M113 armored personnel carrier that saw extensive use during the Vietnam War. The M113 replaced the M59 series in the early 1960s.



Viewpoint

INFORMATION, OPINIONS AND COMMENTARY

Carefully consider tax return options

Capt. Nathan Broshear
505th Command and Control Wing

HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. — A servicemember walked into my office the other day excited about the new flat-panel television he was about to purchase. Here's a confession: I don't have a flat-panel TV ... yet. I guess I'm not "keeping up with the Joneses."

Curious as to how he could afford such an extravagance, I asked how he'd pay for such a pricey item.

He smiled and said, "I'm buying it with my tax return money."

Cue the dramatic music! Since I've taken it as my life mission to help young troops avoid the pitfalls of modern personal finance, you can guess how the rest of the conversation went. Be it insurance scams or predatory auto dealers, I believe it's incumbent upon supervisors, officers and co-workers to help our up-and-coming servicemembers

prepare for a secure financial future.

Using one's tax return money for a brief pick-me-up at the local chain store is tempting. I'll admit that in my younger days, I once blew a check from Uncle Sam like a rock star trying to make the cover of a tabloid. But I've learned my lesson, and I hope to help you resist the temptation.

So what should you do with your refund check? First, let's make one thing clear: the check you receive after filing your taxes is a tax "return" or "refund" — the money in that check didn't materialize out of thin air. It was yours all along.

You "overpaid" your taxes and gave the government (your employer coincidentally) an interest-free loan. When you file your taxes, all you're doing is requesting what's rightly yours back.

And for all that, you still have to wait 10 to 14 days, or longer, to get it.

One could adjust their withholding so that at the end of the year, the amount withdrawn from their check each month equals the

proper amount they'd pay in taxes. I still haven't met someone who has successfully pulled this off. More often than not, they've adjusted their withholding only to end up owing money because of some new change in the tax code (and you can be sure the tax code will change every year).

Of course, the Thrift Savings Plan should always be part of a complete financial plan. Putting money into the TSP decreases the amount of income tax you'll pay and can add up to healthy addition to a military pension. So don't forget about the TSP. But since you can't sock away your tax refund in the TSP, it's a smart move to do the next best thing...read on, young Jedi.

There are a wealth of financial experts out there with different opinions as to what you should do if you're expecting a tax refund. The one common denominator is this: if you have credit card debt of any kind it's imperative that you attack that albatross first. Credit card debt is like a bad infection. It will eat you alive if you're not careful. With the average American carrying well over \$5,000 in debt at an average rate of 18 percent, there are few investments that will serve you as well as retiring a

credit card.

Paying off credit card debt should always be first on your list. "First" means before the flat-panel TV, before a new couch and before you buy something to make your car more "fast-and-furious."

If you're smart enough to not have credit card debt, then starting (or fully funding) a Roth IRA is likely the smartest financial move you can make. Contributions to a Roth are capped at \$4,000 per year for individuals. But did you know you can also put away another \$4,000 for your spouse, even if he or she doesn't work? That's as long as you file your tax "married filing joint."

Here are some other wealth-generating ideas for your tax refund: Pay down your mortgage. Start a college savings plan for your children. Start or beef-up a "rainy-day" fund. Fix your car — a well-maintained car gets better gas mileage. Give a portion to charity — you know it's Army and Air

Force Assistance Fund season. Open a brokerage account and buy solid dividend-paying stocks. Buy new energy-saving appliances or windows. Or invest in yourself by learning a skill or finishing a degree program.

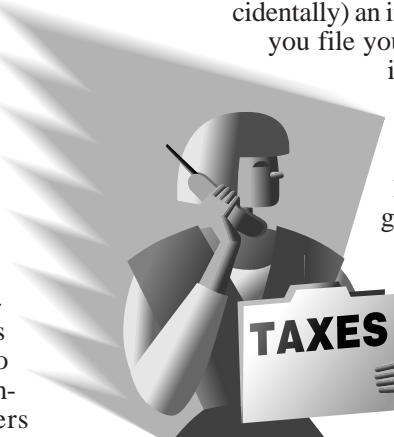
No matter what you choose, think about the long-term implications.

Is this something that will cost you more money or something that will make you money? The wealthy didn't get their fortunes buying items at the mall.

They got there by buying items that grew in value, saved them future money or paid dividends. You can, too!

In the military we do a great job of mentoring our co-workers on the battlefield, but sometimes forget about the fight for financial freedom. Help your troops make sound financial decisions with their tax refund.

For many, their tax refund is the largest lump-sum check they've ever had — and a great opportunity for a positive change in their financial flightplan.



Feedback...

What do you plan to do with your income tax return?

By Larry Edmond



I owe the government money. So I will be paying them this year. I didn't realize it until I saw my W-2's. I didn't pay any federal taxes all year.

Sgt. Nicholas Jordan
HHC, 324th Signal Battalion



We'll put the small amount that we get into the kid's college fund. We don't get much because we plan on getting a smaller refund and hold down that tax-free loan to the government.

Nancy Rozzo
Military spouse



We already got a pretty decent piece of change. We used our refund to drive down some of our credit card bills.

Staff Sgt. Michael Placker
434th Army Band



I plan to use my income tax to increase my TSP fund. I am getting several thousands back.

Staff Sgt. William Ellis
324th Signal Battalion



I am going to invest some back into my self-direct 401(K) and pay off a couple of high interest credit cards.

Robert Williams
C-4 Planning Solutions contractor



I plan to save part, and invest some in new appliances that we need around the house. I will be getting a nice little bit back.

Sgt. Marlon Hall
Co. B, 442nd Signal Battalion

Jenny

'Gear'

By Julie L. Negron



The Signal

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Photo by Charmain Brackett

Maryann Carlson with the Missoula Children's Theatre Co. demonstrates a game during the auditions for The Frog Prince at the youth services gym Monday.

Young thespians hop to stage for performance of 'Frog Prince'

Charmain Z. Brackett
Contributing writer

It's a dizzying week for Kelley Davis and Maryann Carlson.

They meet a group of children on Monday, cast about 50 of them for a show, rehearse, rehearse and rehearse some more, and by Saturday afternoon, the show is ready for the stage – costumes, dialogue, song, dance and all.

"It doesn't stress us out as much as it did," said Davis, who along with Carlson, is part of Missoula Children's Theatre, a company from Missoula, Mont.

This school year they've been taking the Missoula Children's Theatre version of "The Frog Prince" to children in about 40 cities in 17 states. This week, they are at Fort Gordon, and the final product of their work with area children will be performed at 3 p.m. Saturday at Alexander Hall.

This is the first year Davis has worked with the company.

"I graduated with a theater and education degree. I wanted to work with kids, do theater and travel. (With Missoula), I can combine all three so I went for it," she said.

This is the fifth year the group has brought a production to the installation.

"It's always a wonderful experience for the kids," said Steve Walpert, Fort Gordon's entertainment director, who attended Monday's auditions of 76 children.

Each year, the company has brought a different show. The shows are based on familiar tales, but with a Missoula twist. Last year, the show was "The Jungle Book."

The Frog Prince is the tale of a frog who does a good deed for a princess and in return asks for the promise of friendship. The princess reneges on the promise, and the frog tries everything to get her to fulfill it.

In the end, all things work out, but one moral of the story is you can't force people to be your friend.

Rhianna Davis, a 13 year-old Spirit Creek Middle School student, plays Princess Proper, one of three princesses in the tale.

"It's fun and exciting," said Rhianna, who was in The Jungle Book last year. "I like to act. I like the people here."

Sarah Boudet, an 11-year-old homeschool student, is another returning actress. She will play Ollie the Tree.

"It's really fun," she said.

Tickets to The Frog Prince are \$8 for ages 12 and older; \$6 for seniors 65 and older and \$5 for children under 12. For information, call (706) 793-8552.

Earth Day celebrated

Charmain Z. Brackett
Contributing writer

Ken Boyd gets almost the same reaction everywhere he goes.

When Fort Gordon's wildlife biologist makes a presentation with snakes, "the kids scoot forward and the adults go to the back," said Boyd, who along with Steve Willard, Fort Gordon's Environmental Branch chief, took a few snakes to North Augusta's Kids Earth Day Saturday.

"It's all about education," said Boyd on why the duo took a Saturday to spend talking about the difference between venomous and non-venomous snakes and other questions as

they arose. "We do a lot of this kind of stuff. It's important for the youth."

Instilling in children at a young age an interest in the environment and conservation is another goal of the biologists.

April is an especially busy month for the environmental branch with several Earth Day celebrations taking place. Boyd and Willard will also be participating in the Earth Day events from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday at Phinizy Swamp Nature Park.

About 2,000 people attended the free events at North Augusta's Lions Field Saturday, according to Allison May with the city of North Augusta, one of the event's sponsors.

More than 30 exhibitors par-

ticipated; many of them brought hands-on projects children could have fun with and learn at the same time.

The National Science Center's Fort Discovery had an exhibit; the Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy brought out the Phinizy Swampmobile and the South Carolina National Guard brought out its rock-climbing wall.

Okefenokee Joe sang songs and told stories about how Earth Day was every day.

For 6-year-old Vyolet Courtney, the most fun part of the day was filling up her goodie bag with pencils, Frisbees and boomerangs.

"I like everything I win," she said.



Photo by Charmain Brackett

Steve Willard, Fort Gordon's Environmental Branch chief, holds a hognose snake for people to touch at North Augusta's Earth Day Saturday at Lions Memorial Field in North Augusta.

New recruits in critical specialties eligible for matching TSP funds

Army News Service

The Army announced Friday that new recruits who are willing to fill critical specialties may receive matching funds when enrolling in the Thrift Savings Plan.

The pilot program runs through Sept. 30, at which time the results of the recruitment incentive will then be studied to determine whether the program should become a permanent part of the Army's recruiting policies. The incentive is available to all non-prior service enlistees electing to serve five or more years on active duty in critical specialties.

Critical specialties are based on the needs of the Army, are subject to change and will be designated by the Secretary of the Army. Matching funds will be made on the first 5 percent of pay contributed each pay period of the Soldier's initial term. The first 3 percent of contributions will be matched dollar for dollar, the remaining 2 per-

cent will be matched 50 cents on the dollar.

The TSP is a government sponsored savings and investment program. It provides Soldiers a vehicle to invest their salary while offering tax deferred advantages similar to 401 (k) plans in the civilian sector.

Currently, Soldiers may contribute any percentage of their basic pay, incentives, special or bonus pay up to the IRS annual tax-deferred limit of \$15,000. Soldiers pay no taxes on the money until it is withdrawn. A special feature of TSP is that money contributed while in a combat zone will never be taxed, even if it is withdrawn early.

Additionally, the only taxes paid on combat zone contributions are on the earnings rather than the balance.

Soldiers who serve short terms may reinvest or transfer TSP contributions and earnings to retirement programs offered by private sector employers.

(Information provided by the Army G1 Public Affairs Office.)

Group donates home to wounded Soldier

Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Three years ago, Pfc. Sam Ross Jr. was disposing of munitions near Baghdad when an explosion took his eyesight, his left leg, part of his hearing and, ultimately, his military career.

Last month, the former 82nd Airborne Division Soldier moved into a custom-built log cabin specially designed and built for his needs, courtesy of “Homes for Our Troops.”

“This is my dream, and it’s finally under way,” the 22-year-old Ross said as his handicapped-accessible log home started taking shape on a hill-top in his native Dunbar, Pa.

Ross used to play on the lot where his new home stands when he was a child. “He wanted to get back to a place he could see in his mind,” Kirt Rebello, director of projects and veterans affairs for Homes for Our Troops, told American Forces Press Service.

With corporate and private donations of money, materials and professional labor through the Homes for Our Troops program, Ross’ custom home became a reality. He was so excited about it that he moved in even before the kitchen cabinets, with three-dimensional carvings of animals that he can

feel, were installed, Rebello said.

“It’s all in now. Everything’s done now except the basement,” Ross said during a telephone interview. “It’s really come along.”

John Gonsalves founded Homes for Our Troops in February 2004 to serve troops returning home from overseas deployments with severe injuries. The organization is a partner in the Defense Department’s “America Supports You” program, which showcases America’s support for the men and women of the armed forces and the myriad ways the country is expressing that support.

Since its founding, Homes for Our Troops has been building and remodeling homes for wounded troops and winning accolades from all corners along the way. President Bush praised the program during a visit to Camp Pendleton, Calif., in December, then invited Gonsalves and other America Supports You team members to the White House in March to thank them personally for their contributions. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and Marine Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, have also pointed to the program as an example of the many initiatives under way to

support the troops.

Phil Mickelson, winner of golf’s Masters Tournament this year and in 2004, announced for the second consecutive year that he will play this year’s PGA Tour season on behalf of the program. Mickelson is donating \$100 for each birdie and \$500 for each eagle he makes during the tour season through his “Birdies for the Brave” fundraising effort.

“It’s too soon to tell,” how much Mickelson will raise for Homes for Our Troops this year, Gonsalves said. “But the way he’s playing, it looks like it’s going to be a good year,” he predicted. “He’s on fire.”

Mickelson told the Homes for Our Troops organization he feels privileged to be a part of the program. “I am honored to assist Homes for Our Troops with their efforts in meeting the housing needs of our servicemen and women who have given so much for our country,” he said.

But the golf champion’s contributions go beyond the dollars he raises for the organization. “It’s hard to calculate the value of the awareness he is generating,” Gonsalves said. “With Phil leading the way, we know awareness of the cause will be raised and a great number of American heroes will be able to get the help they need



Courtesy photo

Sam Ross Jr., a former 82nd Airborne Division Soldier severely wounded in Iraq, stands on the deck of his new log cabin in Dunbar, Pa., custom-built for his needs by “Homes for Our Troops.”

and deserve.”

Gonsalves called the program an important way to acknowledge servicemembers’ service and sacrifice. “The men and women of our military make great sacrifices to keep America safe, and one of our goals is to make sure they are not forgotten,” he said.

Homes for Our Troops has completed six houses for

wounded troops and has 11 more projects under construction or in the planning stages, Rebello said.

This effort got some boosted momentum earlier this month after an anonymous donor presented the organization with a check for \$500,000, in addition to \$75,000 in donations during the past year. Dozens of other wounded troops have

expressed interest in receiving assistance, Rebello said.

After 12 years in the Marine Corps, Rebello said, there’s “nothing else I’d rather be doing” than helping wounded troops move forward with their lives. “Nobody deserves the dream of home ownership more than someone who has sacrificed so much for it,” he said.

Soldiers worship at sunrise services

Sgt. 1st Class David Abrams

Army News Service

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – As the sun rose over Baghdad on Easter morning Sunday, 250 Task Force Baghdad Soldiers gathered for a sunrise worship service on the shores of an artificial lake built during Saddam Hussein’s reign.

“This is the day we look forward to all year,” said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) James White, Task Force Baghdad chaplain. “Yes, there’s a risk involved in coming out here to hold a service by the lake, but my message to those who have gathered here today is that we have freedom of worship. I’m just thankful to be back here in Iraq worshipping the Lord on this beautiful day.”

As the Soldiers sat in rows of chairs in front of Task Force Baghdad

headquarters and bowed their heads in prayer, two Blackhawk helicopters flew low overhead, a reminder that the Operation Iraqi Freedom mission still continued outside the secure boundaries of the U.S. camp.

After scripture reading and hymns played by the Task Force Baghdad Band, Chaplain (Col.) Glenn Bloomstrom, from the Department of the Army’s Office of the Chief of Chaplains, delivered a special “dialogue sermon” with his co-worker Chaplain (Maj.) Maury Stout, focusing on the freedoms Soldiers enjoy, even in the midst of a combat zone.

“How many of you dog-face Soldiers are glad to know that Jesus is alive?” Bloomstrom asked the congregation. “If you are, give me a big hooah.”

The early-morning lakeside stillness was broken by an enthusiastic ren-

dering of the all-purpose Army shout from more than 200 Soldiers celebrating their Easter tradition 2,000 miles from home.

“It was a good message and a beautiful site to hold a service,” said Sgt. Maj. James Bennett, Task Force Baghdad G-6 sergeant major. “I think everyone got something out of it.”

“Services like this help foster camaraderie among Soldiers, he added. “Just being here brings everyone closer to each other and to the Lord.”

Inter-denominational sunrise services were offered at the various forward operating bases throughout Iraq. Services were also conducted the previous week for the Jewish Passover and for the Christian holidays of Palm Sunday, Holy (Maundy) Thursday, Good Friday and Easter.

(Abrams works for the Task Force Baghdad Public Affairs Office.)



Photo by Bonnie Heater

Early prayers

Chaplain (Maj.) Pablo Jose Riveramadera, 15th Signal Brigade, gives the benediction during the Easter Sunrise Service at Freedom Park Sunday. About 60 people attended the service.

Boston cardinal selects Air Force chaplain

Master Sgt. Russell Petcoff

11th Wing Public Affairs

BOLLING AIR FORCE BASE, D.C. – The early 20th century American author Thomas Wolfe wrote a book titled “You Can’t Go Home Again.” That saying doesn’t hold true for a priest in the Air Force chief of chaplains office.

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Richard Erikson will be coming home again, courtesy of Cardinal Seán O’Malley of the Boston Archdiocese.

The cardinal selected the Watertown, Mass., native to become the next vicar general and moderator of the curia for the archdiocese.

“I was stunned,” Erikson said of the announcement.

The priest said he will be the principal administrator for the archdiocese, the number two position after the cardinal.

“It’s similar to (chief executive officer),” the chaplain said.

Erikson is currently a staff chaplain for plans and programs in the office of chief of chaplains here. In this job, Erikson oversees Catholic ministries in the Air Force. He also provides mentoring and care for the other Catholic priests in the service.

He is the senior Catholic priest on the staff, serving as liaison between the archdiocese for the military and Chaplain (Maj. Gen.) Charles Baldwin, chief of the Air Force Chaplain Service.

“I am most grateful for Father Erikson’s willingness to assume this important responsibility, particularly at a time when the archdiocese is preparing to undertake a series of new initiatives in Catholic education, institutional development and other areas,” O’Malley said.

Baldwin praised the priest’s service to the Air Force.

“Chaplain Erikson is the

epitome of both a priest and a chaplain,” Baldwin said. “He has exemplified the ability to be true to your faith commitments and to be able to serve Airmen of all faiths. He represents what an Air Force chaplain is all about.”

The Air Force’s top chaplain added praise for O’Malley’s selection of Erikson as the next vicar general.

“Chaplain Erikson’s selection as vicar general is a great testimony to the wisdom of Cardinal O’Malley. Chaplain Erikson is a man of great faith, great integrity and great love,” Baldwin said. “He will bring healing and restore the trust in the Catholic leadership of the

archdiocese.”

Baldwin also pointed out the prestige the cardinal’s selection means for Air Force priests.

“As desperate as we are in the Air Force to keep our Roman Catholic chaplains, this appointment honors the priests who are serving in uniform. Both the church and the Air Force are blessed,” Baldwin said.

The path to the chaplain’s selection began last month. Erickson said the cardinal’s secretary, Reverend Robert Kickham, contacted him in early March to say that O’Malley wanted to see him. The chaplain asked if it could wait until the end of March. He



Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Russell Petcoff

Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Richard M. Erikson will be joining the Archdiocese of Boston in June. Cardinal Sean O’Malley of the Boston Archdiocese selected the Air Force chaplain to be his vicar general and moderator of the curia. The chaplain, who is with the Air Force chief of chaplains office at Bolling Air Force Base, D.C., will become the principal administrator for the archdiocese, placing him just after O’Malley in the archdiocese.

planned to return home to spend time with his family. It couldn’t wait, Kickham told him.

“I suspected it had something to do with a recall (an endorsing church calling home a military chaplain),” Erikson said. “The fact that (O’Malley) needed to see me right away meant that something was up.”

“I was expecting to be asked to take a parish in Boston,” said the chaplain, who was ordained in the Boston Archdiocese in 1985.

Erikson said O’Malley selected him because “he wanted someone who’s been removed from the archdiocese the past few years.” Erikson has been on active duty since 1999.

The position has “enormous responsibility and enormous tasks” and “a certain amount of concern” as the diocese deals with the sex abuse scandal, he said.

There’s another reason Erikson has mixed emotions about the job. The Air Force had slated him to take what he considers a dream job – a wing chaplaincy at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. However, Erikson said he’d taken a vow of obedience to the Roman Catholic Church and will obey. He remembered the first Mass he celebrated on Bolling after meeting the cardinal. The Mass featured a reference to a Hebrew scripture that read, “Do not refuse and do not resist.”

“I am very grateful that the archbishop of Boston has wanted me to serve on active duty the last seven years,” Erikson said.

The chaplain, who is separating from the Air Force, also has 14 years in the Reserve. He plans to stay in the Reserve when he takes on his new job. During his career, Erikson said deploying to Balad Air Base, Iraq, was his “greatest memory and greatest privilege.”

Community Events

Scholarship available

The Fort Gordon Sergeants Major Association is now accepting applications for its scholarship awards. Essay packets are available from Army Community Service in Darling Hall.

Applications are due **May 31**. Applicants must be a high school senior and scheduled to graduate during the 2006 spring/summer school year. Applicant's parents do not have to be affiliated with the military.

For more information contact Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur Washington at (706) 791-2519, or Vanessa Stanley at (706) 791-3579.

U-Do-It moves

The U-Do-It store has moved to Building 14600, on 15th Street next to the Directorate of Public Works and Logistics.

New hours are 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday to Friday, and the phone number is now (706) 791-4533.

Warrant officers wanted

The Warrant Officer Recruiting Team will be here **May 15 to 19** to provide information on qualifications and application procedures for Soldiers interested in becoming warrant officers.

Briefings will be held in Darling Hall, Room 229B, at 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. daily.

For information, call (706) 791-5771.

Signal reunion

The 17th Signal Battalion is having a reunion **Sept. 14 to 17** in Philadelphia. For information, call (703) 281-3170 or e-mail adjanssen@aol.com.

Theater play

The Augusta State University Born to Read Literacy Center and Patchwork Players perform "Three Billy Goats Gruff" at 10 and 11 a.m. **May 10** at the Maxwell Performing Arts Theater, 2500 Walton Way.

Cost is \$3.50 per person. Call (706) 733-7043 for reservations.

Jazz concert

The Augusta State University Conservatory Jazz Band plays at 7:30 p.m. **Saturday** at the Maxwell Performing Arts Theater, 2500 Walton Way. Admission is free. For information, call (706) 731-7971.

Motorcycle ride

The American Legion Riders is having its second annual motorcycle rodeo **June 17** at the American Legion Post 178 on Richmond Hill Road.

A poker run and scavenger hunt begins at 9 a.m.; other activities including a bike

show, games, vendors and more begins at 1 p.m. Admission is \$5 for poker run and \$6 for field activities. A portion of the proceeds to benefit the Fisher House. For information, call (706) 414-2220.

Volleyball camp

Augusta Prep's fourth annual volleyball camp is **June 12 to 16**. There are two sessions for middle school (9 a.m.-noon) and high school (1-4 p.m.)

Cost is \$100 and includes a T-shirt. For details, call (706) 863-1906 ext. 361 or e-mail richb@augustaprep.org.

Volunteer week

National Volunteer Week is April 23 to 29. The national theme for the week is "Volunteers Inspire by Example."

Army Community Service is holding a luncheon from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. **Wednesday** at the Gordon Club. About 100 installation volunteers will be nominated by their organizations and honored with complimentary meals.

For information call Lynn Harshman at (706) 791-3880.

Hooah race

The fifth annual Army "HOOAH" 5K and 10K Road Races is **June 10** in Atlanta.

The 10K begins at the Georgia International Convention Center; the 5K begins at the East Point Library. Both races finish at Fort McPherson.

Mail-in registration deadline is May 30. Early registration fee is \$15. For details, go to www.armyhooahrace.army.mil.

Volunteers wanted

The National Science Center's Fort Discovery is accepting applications for students age 14 to 18 to participate in the Student Summer Volunteer Program.

Student volunteers meet new friends, practice customer service skills, sharpen math and science knowledge and earn valuable community service experience, all in the fun, stimulating and safe environment of Fort Discovery.

For information call Kathy Thibault at (706) 821-0609 or e-mail thibaultk@nscdiscovery.org for information and to request an application.

Heritage festival

Grovetown is having its annual Heritage Festival **April 29**.

Activities include a 5K Walk/Run; cost is \$12. All participants will receive a commemorative T-shirt, and proceeds go to support the Grovetown Summer Youth Program.

The run begins at 9 a.m. at the Grovetown gazebo on East Robinson Avenue next to City Hall.

For information, contact Dawn Green at (706) 210-5409 or Conner Little at (706) 228-1576.

Cinco de Mayo

The annual Fort Gordon Cinco de Mayo Festival is noon-1 a.m. **Friday and April 29** at Freedom Park and Barton Field.

Enjoy ethnic food and beverages, live entertainment, a craft show, flea market, carnival (**Thursday to April 30**) and more.

For information, call (706) 791-6779 or go to www.fortgordon.com.

Service Club news

The Fort Gordon Service Club is having a formal luncheon and tea at 11:30 a.m. **Monday** at Palazzo's Cafe on Furrys Ferry Road; cost is \$14.95

Reservations are required. Call Joanie Bryant at (706) 863-2931 or e-mail JBryant428@aol.com by Wednesday for reservations.

The club is also having its May Voting Luncheon at 11:30 a.m. **May 2** at the Gordon Club to vote for new board members.

Lunch choices include lemon pepper chicken with rice and vegetables, salad, rolls, drinks, and dessert for \$8.95, or a chef's salad, rolls, drinks, and dessert for \$7.50.

Call Joanie Bryant at (706) 863-2931 or e-mail JBryant428@aol.com by Wednesday for reservations.

Mothers Day brunch

There is a Mother's Day brunch for military wives from 10 a.m.-noon **May 13** at Dayspring Church.

Free childcare provided. Space is limited.

Call Caren Bevins at (706) 631-5899 or e-mail momsbrunch2006@hotmail.com for information.

Police wanted

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg police department is recruiting applicants for its department at 9 a.m. **May 3** at the Army Career and Alumni Program office here.

For information, call (704) 432-1615 or e-mail dharkey@cmpd.org.

EEO training

The Equal Employment Opportunity office is holding annual EEO refresher training for all employees.

Training is offered 1:30-3:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 9 or 23, and June 6 or 20 in Olmstead Hall; and 8-10 a.m. Aug. 29 or 1-3 p.m. Sept. 8 in Alexander Hall. Employees must attend one of the sessions.

Additionally, EEO is offering Employment Training for Supervisors – A Supervisory Guide to Managing Employees for managers from 9-11:30 a.m. May 16 at the Eisenhower Army Medical Center auditorium or 9-11:30 a.m. July 19 in Nelson Hall Studio B.

To register for the managers course or for information, call (706) 791-4551.

Summer camps

Fort Discovery offers 12 different summer camps for students in second through eighth grades. Early bird registration cut-off is **Friday**; deadline for all camps is May 31.

Early registration cost is \$125 for members, \$155 for non-members; afterwards cost is \$150 and \$175 respectively.

Camps include Discovery Island, By Kids For Kids Brainstorm Challenge, Space & Rocketry, Robo-Tech, Mission: Discover Mars, CSI: Discover Whodunit! and Whodunit? The Science of Solving Crime.

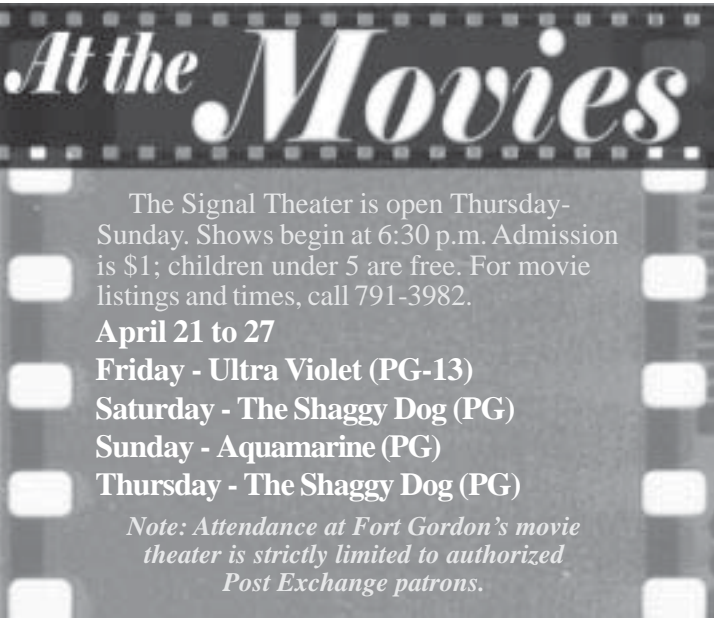
For information contact Lisa Golden at (706) 821-0646.

Child care

The Fort Gordon Family Child Care Program is seeking qualified active duty and retired military spouses to provide on/off post child care.

The next training is June 16 to 27; register for the class **May 1 to 12** from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. daily.

For details call the Family Child Care Office at (706) 791-3993/4440.



Sports UPDATE

Fishing tournament

Mistletoe State Park is having a bass anglers tournament **April 29**. Call (706) 541-0321 for information.

Volleyball camp

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Hooah race

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Mail-in registration deadline is May 30. Early registration fee is \$15. For information, go to www.armyhooahrace.armymil.

Ten-miler tryouts

Tryouts for the Fort Gordon Army Ten-Miler team are **April 28**. The race is Oct. 8 in Washington, D.C. The race is the largest 10 mile race in the United States.

Tryouts are open to men and women, military and civilian. For information, call Ralph Gaines at (706) 791-6024.

Kids golf tourney

The Second Annual Kids Restart golf tournament will be held at Gordon Lakes Golf Course **Friday**. Registration will begin at 11:30 a.m. with a shotgun start at 12:30 p.m.

The cost is \$40 and includes 18 holes of golf, cart and food. Deadline for registration is **April 26**. For information, call (706) 828-0180, ext. 0.

Paintball course

The paintball course behind The Courtyard is open 3 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. Saturday and 1 p.m. Sunday, each day until dark. Group rates available; call (706) 228-5540 for more information.

Junior NASCAR

Child and Youth Services is now accepting registration for Junior NASCAR 2006. The first race date is April 29 for practice laps.

This new youth sport is open to ages 10-18. The cost is \$45. The deadline for registration is **Monday**. For more information, call (706) 791-6500 or go to www.fortgordon.com.

Go-kart track open

The Fort Gordon Go-Kart Track is now open behind The Courtyard.

Go-kart hours are 4-9 p.m. Fridays, 12-9 p.m. Saturdays and 1-7 p.m. Sundays. The cost is \$5 each ride. For more information, call (706) 791-5078.

Veterans' golf fees

Gordon Lakes Golf Course is offering a reduced rate to all prior service veterans.

The cost is \$17 weekdays, \$20 weekends and \$625 for yearly fees. For more information, call (706) 791-2433.

AUSA golf tourney raises hopes, funds

Larry Edmond

Signal staff

It was a great day for a golf tournament.

Hopes were running high among players in the annual Greater Augusta-Fort Gordon Chapter of the Association of the United States Army Golf Tournament Friday on Gordon Lakes Golf Course.

By all measures, the tournament was successful.

"It was the best tournament we have put together yet," said Chuck Withers, tournament director.

The weather was as ideal as you could hope for in the Augusta spring. Temperatures topped out at an unseasonably warm 91 degrees. A favorably gentle breeze frustrated insects and cooled the players.

Organizers congratulated one another and the players at the opening ceremony. "The goal is to have fun," said Withers.

Bob Damen, Greater Augusta-Fort Gordon AUSA Chapter president said, the event was an absolute success.

"This tournament is our one major fundraiser for the year. Thanks to the tremendous outpouring of some 40 corporate sponsors AUSA is able to raise significant funds for our Soldier programs. We depend on this amazing group of corporate sponsors. They certainly did not let us down," Damen said.

He said the tournament was the best ever. "The course is full. The weather is awesome. You couldn't ask for better

conditions."

One of the major sponsors of the tournament is General Dynamics. Pete Farrell, General Dynamics director of training said General Dynamics likes to be involved with the community and support the military.

"This is one of the ways that we can help AUSA and the Army. We have about 170 employees here (at Fort Gordon) and we have the manpower to volunteer to put the effort forward."

The corporation provides prizes and awards. Registration and administration of the tournament was done by 20 General Dynamics employees. "We feel like this is a good project as far as community support. We have done it for the last 10 years. This is a tradition for us," said Farrell.

Coming one week after the Masters Tournament, the AUSA tournament enjoyed a hefty bump in golfing interest spilling over from the Masters.

The AUSA Tournament in many ways has a Masters-like regimentation. Some of the same people behind the scenes at the Masters are in the lead for the AUSA Tournament.

For example Withers, who served as AUSA Tournament



Photo by Larry Edmond

Chris Thatcher, IAP contractor, bears down to shoot for the once-in-a-lifetime hole-in-one shot on the 156-foot Pine View hole #4 during the Association of the United States Army Greater Augusta-Fort Gordon Chapter Annual Golf Tournament at Gordon Lakes Friday.

ters this year. The retired command sergeant major is employed with General Dynamics.

With military precision, the tournament kicked off on time at 12:30 p.m. Players dispersed from the club house for a shotgun start.

In the Lauderdale style captain's choice tournament every player on the team takes a stroke. The team captain chooses the best shot and the group continues playing in turn, with the captain choosing the best shot to advance until the hole is played.

Every duffer and tournament player knows the gods of golf are fickle. On any given day, elements outside of player control can rise up to help or hinder the process of driving the little white sphere into the cup.

Legendary greatness and utter defeat hover between hopes born from the memory of a freaky bounce or a sudden gust of wind.

Three holes offered a chance for instant fame and a new vehicle.

Only about 160 yards and the fickle finger of fate stood between the players and the big prizes.

Make a hole in one and a new vehicle is yours. Augusta Dodge had positioned a shiny new vehicle behind the tee of

each money hole to remind players that this could be more than just another day on the course.

No matter how rank the amateur or jaded the tournament player, there was a serious set to the cheek and the eyes were focused more intensely as money hole hopes transcended reason.

As golfers approached the money hole shot, there was a palpable pulse of hope. Long odds meant nothing.

No one managed an ace and Withers did little to dampen the hope. "The odds are about two million-to-one that anyone will make that hole in one," he said. Then the Fort Gordon seniors champion smilingly added, "Every hole in one I ever made was right here at Fort Gordon."

TOURNAMENT WINNERS

First flight

First place
Score of 59
Amos Captain
Leroy Powell
Willie Williams
Eddie Ferguson

Second flight

First place
Score of 65
Roy Ellis
Robert Turman
Greg Gadape
Mr. Ellen

Third flight

First place
Score of 65
Mike Burke
Virgil Wynn
James Rice
Milton DeRowen



Photo by Tammy Moehlman

Cycling Georgia

Cycling enthusiasts and curious onlookers lined the streets in downtown Augusta and elsewhere along the Tour de Georgia race route Tuesday as more than 100 professional cyclists began the first stage of a six stage race that finishes in Alpharetta, Ga., Sunday. This is the third year that Augusta has been the host city for the start of the race. Last year Lance Armstrong was among the cyclists who traveled from around the world to compete in the six day race that totals more than 600 miles.

Soldier named 2005 Women's Wrestler of the Year

Tim Hipps

Army News Service

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — A Soldier in the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program has been named the 2005 Women's Wrestler of the Year by USA Wrestling.

The highlight of Sgt. Iris Smith's year was a gold-medal performance in the women's 158.5-pound freestyle division of the 2005 World Wrestling Championships in Budapest, Hungary. She also finished third in her weight class at the 2005 World Cup of Wrestling in Clermont-Ferrand, France.

Earlier this year, Smith was named 2005 Female Wrestler of the Year by the U.S. Olympic Committee. She also received a plaque from the Sportswomen of Colorado for her outstanding performances.

"Winning the world championship definitely was one of the goals that I've been trying

to reach for the past 10 years," Smith said. "Being a part of the World Class Athlete Program definitely helped me out a lot. I'm able to focus and still have a career and do something I love doing."

As the only American to win a gold medal in the 2005 World Wrestling Championships, Smith became the fourth U.S. female wrestler to win a world crown, joining four-time gold medalist Tricia Saunders, two-time gold medalist Kristie Marano and Sandra Bacher.

Smith is the only U.S. woman to win a world crown since women's wrestling became an Olympic sport.

Smith upset five-time world champion Kyoko Hamaguchi of Japan to become the new world champion in her weight class. To reach the championship match, Smith posted victories over Bulgaria's Stanka Zlateva, Poland's Angnieska Wiececzek and Germany's Anita Schaeztle.

Smith, 26, has competed twice in the World Championships, finishing seventh in 2000. She also made Team USA's roster for the 2001 World Championships but missed the tournament to attend Army basic training.

"My main goal is to win the Olympic gold medal," Smith said. "Until then, I'm just going to continue to push forward."

A four-time national champion, Smith did not participate in the 2006 U.S. National Wrestling Championships because of a left-knee injury sustained in January during a tournament in Siberia. She has resumed training and plans to compete June 30 in the 2006 U.S. World Team Trials at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colo.

"It shouldn't be too much of a setback except for just being a little bit rusty," Smith said. "All of that rust can be

cleaned out in the next few weeks."

Champions of the women's U.S. World Team Trials will qualify to represent the U.S. in the 2006 World Wrestling Championships scheduled Sept. 26 through Oct. 1 in Guangzhou, China.

Stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., Smith was born in Albany, Ga., where she began wrestling for the boys' varsity team at Dougherty High School.

(Hipps writes for the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center.)



Photo by Tim Hipps

Sgt. Iris Smith (top) has been named 2005 Women's Wrestler of the Year by USA Wrestling. Smith, a four-time national champion wrestler in the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, is stationed at Fort Carson, Colo.

New radio technology keeps troops in touch

Staff Sgt. Melissa Koskovich

Air Force Print News

SOUTHWEST ASIA – Riding as part of a convoy escort team outside the wire, the Airman feels alone. Feeling nervous, he keys his radio mic to check in with his base – and hears nothing but dead air.

To ensure scenarios like this don't occur, the Air Force is leading a joint implementation of a new "Radio over Internet Protocol Routed network" communication system, known as the RIPRnet.

"With the RIPRnet we have tied convoy radios in with Internet-based technology to extend their range," said Col. Greg Touhill, U.S. Central Command Air Forces-Forward communications director at the Combined Air Operations Center. "This system provides more reliable and robust communications for our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who are out on the roads of Iraq."

Better communications could make the difference be-

tween life and death for troops in Iraq, but that is not the only benefit of the RIPRnet. Other applications include use for air defense and command and control of close-air-support missions.

For example, in the air defense mission, the RIPRnet allows the Combined Forces Air Component commander to communicate by radio directly with aircraft flying over Iraq, Touhill said.

"The commander doesn't have a lot of time to react to a threat, such as a hostile or suspicious aircraft – time past could mean lives lost," he said. "This technology expands his view of the battlefield and allows him to have real-time information, helping him make the right decision quickly."

In addition, the RIPRnet frees resources previously tied up supplementing radio coverage, including those used operating remote radio relay points throughout Iraq to support convoy communications.

"In an effort to complement our convoy communications,

the Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System aircraft provide supplemental radio coverage throughout Iraq," Touhill said. "But, JSTARS can't be everywhere, and other factors could limit its availability to conduct radio relay missions."

Because of this, coalition communicators designed the RIPRnet to provide robust communications coverage along the roads of Iraq.

Full installation of the RIPRnet, scheduled for completion this year, will allow approximately 200 Soldiers currently manning radio relay stations, to return behind protected walls.

"These Soldiers are literally out in the middle of nowhere. Getting them out of harm's way is another great benefit of this system," said Air Force Maj. Bob Sylvester, operations officer in charge of fielding the capability in Iraq.

In addition, the RIPRnet will allow JSTARS aircraft to concentrate on their primary mission: using moving target indicator radar to track and manage the ground battlespace.

"They'll still be monitoring the convoy nets, but they'll be doing it from orbit points where they can better provide surveillance of key targets," Touhill said.

Seeking a better way to support both the convoy communications and surveillance missions, the CFAC commander decided to field this technology. A coalition communications team working out of the CAOC led the effort. The project is similar to systems used by U.S. Border and Customs authorities and for homeland security purposes.

"We had a road map for this technology, so we decided to leverage it to solve this operational problem," Touhill said. "The joy of this system is that it rolls in on the existing infrastructure. The same infrastructure we use to provide Internet



Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Lance Cheung

A convoy travels through the rural roads near Kirkuk, Iraq, in January. To ensure that convoys like this have reliable communication, the Air Force is leading a joint implementation of a new "Radio over Internet Protocol Routed" network communication system, known as the RIPRnet.

and radio services is used to bring this capability to the warfighter."

Touhill added that the system's console uses the same technology as desktop computers. No specialized training is required to use it.

"We've already done testing in one part of Iraq with great results," he said. "The field units tell us it's an awesome capability that gives them reli-

able radio coverage 24/7. They can't get it fast enough."

Air Force Capt. Rob Ault, chief engineer for the RIPRnet project, recently traveled to Iraq to do a site survey for the system installation.

"During my trip, I rode on one of the convoys," Ault said. "I told the troops running the operation about the RIPRnet, and they were very anxious to see it happen."

Ault said that being outside of a protected base makes a person feel isolated.

"The troops who run these missions deserve the reliable communication that the RIPRnet provides. They deserve someone on the other end of the mic when they key it up," he said. "They want to know that they have a better chance of getting home to their families."



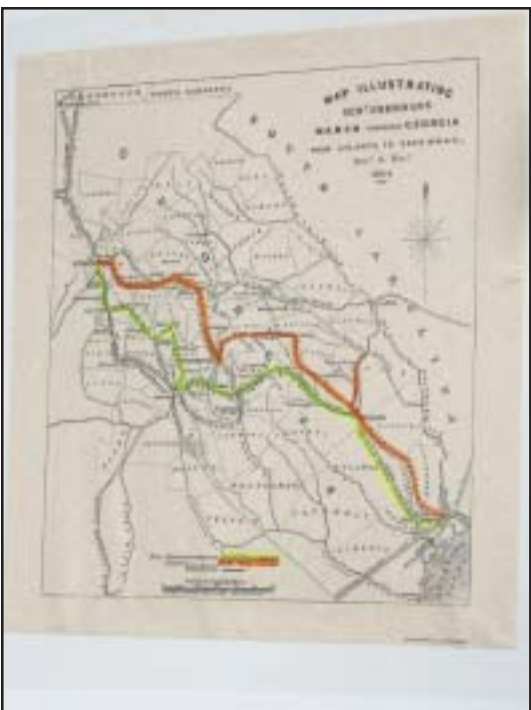
Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Melissa Koskovich

Tech. Sgt. Eric Yingling, communications engineer at the Combined Air Operations Center, uses a "Radio over Internet Protocol Routed network" communication system console to monitor convoy operations March 31. Full installation of the RIPRnet will allow servicemembers who are out on the roads to Iraq to communicate more reliably.

Spectrum



Capt. Joseph Price, Headquarters and Company A, 73rd Ordnance Battalion, admires a cemetery at Ebenezer Church, the camp site of Gen. William Sherman's Union Army while on its March to the Sea during the Civil War. The church site was one of several key locations visited by officers of the 73rd Ord. Bn. as part of a staff ride to Savannah, Ga.



A map of Sherman's March to the Sea displays the two corps of his army that were split to throw off the Confederate Army and allow them to meet up in Savannah, Ga., where Sherman's Army took control of Fort McAllister. The logistics of the march parallel logistics of today's Army and the purpose of the staff ride was to help the officers of the 73rd Ord. Bn. relate to challenges faced by officers more than 100 years ago.



The first stop of the day was Buckhead Church near Waynesboro, Ga., where Sherman's Army made camp and battled Confederate forces. The officers were required to brief each other as an officer they were assigned to portray.



A cannon still overlooks a waterway at Fort McAllister in Savannah, Ga. The fort was seized by Sherman during his March to the Sea.



To prevent the Confederate Army from resupplying by train, Sherman's Army bent the railroad track into what is known as "Sherman's bowtie." This bowtie is on display at Fort McAllister, Ga.

73rd takes field trip back in time

Kristy Davies
Signal staff

During the Civil War, Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman faced multiple challenges, but managed to accomplish his goals regardless of obstacles.

Lessons learned from Sherman and armies of the past can be applied to modern Army challenges as was demonstrated during a staff ride with the 73rd Ordnance Battalion recently.

"A staff ride is a systematic study of a historical battle using a three phase methodology," explained Steve Rauch, U.S. Army Signal Center command historian. "A preliminary study phase, a field phase of visiting the battle and then an integration phase which is to assess why things happened and how they happened and draw lessons or insights for today."

For the officers from the 73rd, it was a field trip full of fun, history, camaraderie and lessons in logistics of today's Army.

"I think it went very well and I think the officers got a lot out of it," said Lt. Col. Wade Sokolosky, 73rd Ord. Bn. commander, as he reflected on the trip while traveling back to post on a charter bus. "They see how you can take something that happened 140 years ago...some of the lessons learned that those officers learned back then when they were commanders or staff officers, and are still applicable today."

"You see in this campaign, Sherman's March to the Sea, that we're dealing with (the same) issues such as displaced civilians and how we handle and treat prisoners of war," added Sokolosky.

Staff rides are a learning tool used mainly by the Signal Center and Leader College for Information Technology to train officers in the Signal Captain Career Course, but are also used by individual units.

"They are a (Training and Doctrine Command) approved training method that are used in service schools and for unit professional development ac-

tivities," said Rauch. It really depends on what the commander's focus is and what they want to accomplish. I have conducted staff rides from senior officer level all the way down to junior Soldier level at various places.

"It gives them some insights into the challenges that other officers and Soldiers have faced over the years, because one of the timeless elements is the human dimension," explained Rauch. "Humans really don't change too much. The challenges that people faced in 1864, as human beings, are very similar to the challenges people face today in 2006."

Along the route of the staff ride and Sherman's March to the Sea, the group of a dozen officers from the 73rd visited historic sites including Buckhead Church near Waynesboro, Ga.; Magnolia Springs State Park, site of one of the largest prisoner of war camps, Camp Lawton; Millen Train Depot in Millen, Ga.; Ebenezer Church, the camp site of the Union XIVth Army Corps and place where Sherman's Army abandoned thousands of refugees; King's Bridge; and Fort McAllister State Park in Savannah, Ga., where Sherman set up a temporary post to receive supplies before heading into South Carolina.

"The great thing about this staff ride is that the 73rd is composed of mostly logisticians," added Sokolosky. "This staff ride (to Savannah) provides a great backdrop for studying the logistics of a campaign from the individual Soldier all the way back to what the war department is doing at the strategic level in pre-positioning supplies, transportation assets and anticipating Sherman's arrival on the coast."

Staff rides available to the installation vary and can be selected through a list of options at the command historian's office.

"(Every SCCC class) goes to a staff ride either at Kennesaw Mountain, near Atlanta, Ga., which is a Civil War battle, or Cowpens in South Carolina, which is a Revolutionary War battle," explained Rauch. "In addition to those required staff rides, the com-

mand historian office conducts several other staff rides throughout the year for units like the 73rd.

"We do them, probably about 11 or 12 a year as requested by a command," he added. "I have a 'menu' of places that they can go to depending on the size of their unit and what they want to accomplish."

The staff ride to Savannah was the first of its kind.

"This staff ride is really the first time that this has been executed to the stance that we did today," said Rauch. "The menu is expanding."

Each officer on the staff ride was assigned the role of an officer who played an important part in Sherman's March to the Sea. They studied the key elements of their character and briefed the group at each significant point of the march.

"(This staff ride) was a really good learning experience," said Capt. Joseph Price, Headquarters and Company A, 73rd Ord. Bn. "We learned that things that happened over 100 years ago we're still facing today with treatment of prisoners of war, planning for proper logistics, pre-positioning supplies and knowing where they have them; things that we're facing today in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Being able to relate to commanders of the past was not difficult for any of the 73rd officers.

"They had to worry about forage for their animals and I have to worry about fuel for my vehicles," Price said. "I had a lot of fun," added Price.

"Every time I do one of these I always learn something new," Sokolosky said.

Although he will be leaving Fort Gordon this summer, Sokolosky hopes that the unit will continue to do the staff rides.

"I think (staff rides are) a very important and useful tool in the education of U.S. Army Soldiers even today in the 21st century," Rauch said. "As one great American writer, Mark Twain, once said, 'History may not necessarily repeat itself, but it does rhyme.'"



Dan Brown, archivist for the command historian office here, demonstrates the loading technique of a US Model 1861 Springfield Rifle-Musket.



Cpts. Gerveline Middlebrooks and Richard Redding, 73rd Ord. Bn., stand with Steve Rauch, U.S. Army Signal Center command historian, at the site of Camp Lawton, a Civil War prisoner of war camp.